United Nations S/PV.6808

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6808th meeting
Wednesday, 18 July 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Osorio	(Colombia)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Eick
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Morocco	Mr. Taib
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Gaspar da Silva
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2012/506)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-42620 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2012/506)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/506, which contains the thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

I now give the floor to Mr. Koenders.

Mr. Koenders: It is a great honour for me to address the Security Council today following my last briefing on 26 January 2012 (see S/PV.6708).

The thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2012/506), which is before the Security Council, provides members with an update on major developments in the country since the Secretary-General's special report of 29 March 2012 (S/2012/186).

My briefing today will focus on the most crucial issues of the moment for Côte d'Ivoire, particularly with regard to the security situation, the political situation and activities undertaken by the Government, with UNOCI's support, to put the country back on the path to peace and stability.

I would like to start by saying that, as mentioned in my recent briefings to the Council, Côte d'Ivoire is making significant advances on the path to peace, stability and development. The economy is recovering, the country is progressively reintegrating into the West African region, and the overall security situation has improved since the end of the post-electoral crisis last year. Moreover, further to the legislative elections, the National Assembly began its work in April, with a commitment from its President for the Assembly to contribute to national reconciliation and provide effective oversight of the Government on behalf of the Ivorian people.

Yet, this positive picture should not obscure the fact that the country continues to face important challenges and significant threats as it transitions to a peacebuilding phase. In the past couple of weeks, the country has been characterized by a certain degree of political anxiety, showing that the root causes of the conflict — land-related issues, unreformed security forces, impunity, and lack of national reconciliation and political dialogue — need to be tackled urgently and in a transparent manner to the benefit of all Ivorians.

First, with regard to the security situation, it remains particularly volatile, especially but not exclusively in the west, at the Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border, given the weak State authorities, large numbers of weapons, armed elements, former combatants, militias and dozos, as well as competition over the control of resources. Reports of the rearming and recruitment of former Ivorian and Liberian combatants and possible attempts against State security constitute matters of substantial concern for me. Attacks by armed men have been carried out in the villages in the border area, which is often characterized by violent inter-communal confrontations that have the potential to escalate into larger-scale conflicts as long as the underlying root causes, such as land tenure issues, are not effectively tackled.

The situation experienced a dramatic deterioration last month when seven United Nations peacekeepers from Niger lost their lives in an attack by armed elements on the road from Para to Sao, along the border with Liberia, showing the need for continuous vigilance and enhanced action to ensure the protection of civilians. The Government has strengthened its military presence and established a commission to investigate the Para attack, and UNOCI is providing technical assistance and forensics support.

In response to the incidents in the west, UNOCI has boosted its military on the ground by reinforcing troops within Sector West, in line with our operational

imperative to protect civilians and firmly deter any initiative to destabilize the country in different parts of Côte d'Ivoire. We are working closely with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to coordinate our activities, for which a detailed plan of action has been developed.

On their part, the Ivorian and Liberian Governments have increased their military presence in the concerned area and are liaising closely to exchange information. Of special note are an action plan adopted by UNOCI and UNMIL and a quadripartite meeting comprising the Governments of the two countries, as well as UNOCI and UNMIL, that was held in Abidjan on 14 June — just a few days after the attacks — and resulted in an agreement between the parties to further enhance cooperation, including by reinforcing their presence on both sides of the border, intensified air and foot patrols, and activities to protect civilians, strengthened judicial cooperation, and measures to promote reconciliation and development.

The need to combine firmness and vigilance, and to call on the Government to further increase its civilian presence, invest in development and ensure the equitable treatment concerning the land issue cannot be overemphasized at this stage. In particular, there is in our view an urgent need to tackle the root causes of the conflict and promote reconciliation through concrete measures at the national level, while prioritizing the strengthening of the rule of law and the restoration of State authority. It is important that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire place increasing emphasis on this very burning issue.

National reconciliation is key to any process aimed at stabilization and peacebuilding. In this regard, the need for substantive genuine political dialogue remains paramount. On 27 and 28 April, a conclave chaired by the Prime Minister was held in Grand-Bassam, with the participation of the opposition parties, which resulted subsequently in a communiqué announcing the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for ongoing dialogue through which the Government and opposition have an opportunity to continue their exchanges. Yet, a new momentum should be created to allow the constructive engagement of all parties in political dialogue. All parties should strengthen their political will to engage in a well-formulated agenda for a serious political dialogue.

The Government's initiative to engage in dialogue with the political opposition is a positive step. It is important now that the Government continue working towards genuine political dialogue and reconciliation at all levels, and ensure political space for the opposition by clarifying the context and timetable for these consultations and taking reconciliatory measures where and when possible. At the same time, the opposition should play the role of a constructive opposition, use reconciliatory language, and contribute towards building a better future for the country and reconciliation.

The upcoming local elections, for which the Government has requested United Nations assistance, could contribute to strengthening national reconciliation at the local level. However, if these elections are to be successful, it is necessary that certain conditions be met in terms of a larger responsibility of the Ivorian Government and clarity on proper timing, inclusiveness and security, as well as allowing for the reform of the electoral and administrative bodies concerned. It is only under clearly specified conditions related to these issues that any possible UNOCI support should be considered and given the means in financial, administrative and military terms to do undertake such tasks.

Successful national reconciliation also requires the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights. It is of crucial importance that the progress made be solidified, that impunity for human rights violations end, that perpetrators be brought to justice irrespective of their status or political affiliation, that all detainees receive clarity about their status, and that the investigation commission speed up its work. UNOCI remains preoccupied about this situation and asks the Security Council to pay special attention to this important issue.

It is worth noting that, as indicated by the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, many human rights violations resulted less from the State's complicity than from its failure to prevent them, especially owing to the slow progress in reforming the security sector and restoring State authority throughout the country. Thus, efforts that could speed up security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) should be encouraged. In this regard, I wish to highlight the positive steps taken by President Ouattara to further the SSR and DDR agenda, including the creation of an inter-ministerial working group to develop a national framework for SSR and DDR. UNOCI stands ready to continue assisting the Government's efforts to make

SSR and DDR a reality, which requires a unified DDR entity, strict rules on eligibility, and a reliable base.

In this complex phase, it is important that the United Nations continue to play its supportive role in assisting the Government's efforts to stabilize the security situation, protect civilians, restore State authority, promote reconciliation, and undertake post-conflict development assistance. In order to maximize its impact in these areas, UNOCI, together with the United Nations country team, is reinforcing its field presence. We have opened field offices with our military, police and civilian personnel presence in Guiglo, Tabou, Taï and Toulepleu — some of the villages that members of the Security Council visited during the impressive mission that they undertook to Côte d'Ivoire in May. We will soon be opening additional offices and strengthening existing ones to enhance closer cooperation and coordination within the United Nations family, within existing resources. Our action is based on continuous vigilance, research for political solutions and efforts to enhance reconciliation as key to accomplishing our tasks successfully.

In conclusion, let me say that the continued support of the Security Council is at this stage still crucial in order to ensure that we, together, successfully tackle the generalized risks that are typical of countries transitioning to a peacebuilding phase. I remain convinced that, with the Council's support, we can make a positive contribution to making Côte d'Ivoire a success story for its own people and, we hope, for the United Nations as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Koenders for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have just returned from Addis Ababa and took a taxi directly to the Council from John F. Kennedy Airport, so I would ask members to bear with me.

Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Council for the month of July. My delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2012/506), whose mandate ends on 31 July, pursuant to resolution 2000 (2011). We also listened attentively and with interest to the briefing just delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Koenders.

My delegation recalls the joy and great pride of the people of Côte d'Ivoire during the working visit of all 15 members of the Security Council to our country a few weeks ago. At that time, every member had the opportunity to understand and appreciate the gratitude felt by the people of Côte d'Ivoire towards the Council, whose commitment to and determined support for the will of the majority of the sovereign Ivorian people have allowed democracy to prevail in Côte d'Ivoire since the elections and especially to provide effective protection to the civilian population.

During that visit, the Council was able to see for itself the progress that has been made on the ground since the elections, as well as the challenges that still lie ahead. The Council had transparent and exhaustive exchanges with the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Alassane Ouattara, who presented his post-crisis vision for Côte d'Ivoire and his plans to make it an emerging country by 2020. He naturally responded to the questions raised by the Security Council and was able to clarify some issues. The Council also had instructive exchanges with members of the current and previous Governments, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and civil society.

Lastly, the Council made field trips, in particular the west of the country and to an Ivorian refugee camp on the border inside Liberian territory. The Security Council is thus fully aware of the realities on the Côte d'Ivoire agenda. That said, I would like to make a few remarks on specific issues, especially in the light of recent developments.

First, the security situation throughout the country has improved considerably. Life in Abidjan and other large cities has been revitalized, with a perceptible sense of economic recovery and growth, as the report underscores. However, the security situation in the country's western region remains a source of concern. Indeed, the attacks of 8 June and subsequent days in villages of the Taï region, perpetrated by armed groups from Liberia and in which seven Blue Helmets from Niger, several civilians and soldiers of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) lost their lives, have harshly illuminated the nature of the action that took place there and the objectives of those who would destabilize the situation.

Clearly, the criminal acts of these armed groups were perfectly planned and coordinated to exploit the effect of surprise, and designed to strike fear into the hearts of the civilian population. It is also well known to all that such armed groups receive financial aid from exiled Ivorians and illegal mining operations. Some of those who funded and organized the attacks have been identified and apprehended. In that context, on 12 June the Minister of the Interior revealed the existence of a plot against the State following the arrest in a foreign country and extradition to Côte d'Ivoire of a former minister and crony of Mr. Gbagbo. Here, my delegation pays tribute to the memory of the seven UNOCI soldiers and wishes to assure the Council that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has spared no effort to find the perpetrators of these war crimes and bring them to justice.

In the light of these attacks, my country has strengthened its cooperation with Liberia in the areas of defence, justice and law enforcement. The Special Representative reported on cooperation activities involving the missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Quadripartite meetings have been held to address a joint response to the threats. It has also been decided to convene a meeting of the Ivorian-Liberian Joint Commission of Cooperation before the end of the year. Meanwhile, it was agreed that judicial cooperation should be strengthened, and that a joint meeting of chiefs of staff and high-level officials in the communities along the border would be held to promote reconciliation and development activities.

As indicated in paragraph 56 of the report, we welcome the new provisions for cooperation between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI, and the fact that the United Nations country teams in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia will be strengthened to enhance their responsiveness to any possible attacks on either side of the border, especially through cross-border cooperation. My delegation also supports the Secretary-General's recommendation, also in paragraph 56, to transfer to UNOCI three attack helicopters currently deployed in UNMIL to improve the mission's deterrent and anticipation capacities.

The regional dimension of the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire is clear. Indeed, the early signs of the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau have accelerated the implementation of measures taken to respond to subregional threats. At a meeting in Abidjan on 13 March, the Mano River Union adopted an operational plan on peace and security in order to respond to organized transnational crime and trafficking in West Africa. The plan provides for joint border patrols, strengthened information exchange and the establishment of joint units. Another useful measure was the Mano River Union summit held in Conakry on 15 June.

My second point, which is also a source of concern raised in the report, concerns security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). In my statement of April 26 (see S/PV.6761), I informed the Council about the creation of an SSR working group with a view both to identifying a definitive response to the problem of implementing DDR, and to undertaking serious consideration of security and defence mechanisms, not to mention all the various sectors involved in SSR.

In parallel with the efforts of the SSR working group, the Ministers of Defence and of the Interior, in their capacity as pillars of security sector reform, have launched projects within their respective departments. All of these groups have almost completed their work, which they will submit to the SSR scientific committee later this month. This period of intense reflection will lead to significant reforms aimed at maintaining peace, democracy and the safety and security of people and property. Those significant reforms are the result of work specifically focused on security sector reform, defence policies, the reintegration of former combatants and reform of the national police.

The SSR working group, in close cooperation with UNOCI, the United Nations Development Programme, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, identified six pillars of SSR. They are national security, the rule of law and international relations, democratic control, post-crisis reconstruction, economic policy and the social and human dimension.

After identifying challenges, needed reforms and action plans, proposals were submitted to the steering committee for consideration and validation. They focused on four areas: a national DDR policy, new strategies to implement it, a national SSR policy and a unified vision for reforms. Meanwhile, a national security council will be established to oversee DDR and SSR efforts, under the direct control of the President. In that way, DDR will be implemented by one single body, the DDR authority, attached to the President's office. SSR implementation will be assigned to a special minister charged with pursuing reforms in cooperation

with focal points in the various ministries. Each ministry will be responsible for reforms in its areas of focus.

The third element, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, is national reconciliation and political dialogue. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission is focused on long-term solutions, and is endowed with the means to broaden its audience and its actors. There is increasing ownership of grass-roots initiatives through inter-community dialogue strongly encouraged by the Commission. I note with pleasure that the Ivorian diaspora here in New York is particularly engaged in this issue.

As for the political process, the Council saw for itself the extremism of the former ruling party, the Front populaire ivorien (FPI). Fortunately, there have been positive developments, and at the request of the FPI a frank and productive exchange took place two weeks ago between an FPI delegation and a Government delegation led by the Prime Minister. It is to be hoped that this will lead the FPI to participate fully in local elections in order to build itself a platform to take part in democratic politics, exercise its right to free speech and make its expected contribution to national reconstruction. In that context, my delegation seconds the report's recommendations to lend Côte d'Ivoire electoral support.

The fourth element is human rights. My delegation takes note of the concerns expressed in the report about human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. Without trying to downplay its observations, my delegation believes that it would be more appropriate to see things in their proper context. As noted by the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire following his two visits to the country, most human rights abuses are less the result of Government actions than of its inability to prevent them due, inter alia, to difficulties with SSR and the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory. We should not forget that it was not long ago that, in the aftermath of the electoral crisis, when President Ouattara and his Government took effective power, they inherited a veritable no man's land in the matter of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is important to remember that the 10 years of President Gbagbo's rule were a time of non-rule of law. During that time, the people of Côte d'Ivoire were the victims of the worst kinds of violations of human rights, perpetrated by death squads who kidnapped and summarily executed people on the sole suspicion of being opposed to the regime or for the crime of being from the North. Confiscations and beatings, notably of an army colonel and a former Ivorian soccer star, were the norm. I say this to recall that President Ouattara took power in a country that had lost all respect for human rights. It is therefore all the more commendable that he showed the wisdom to immediately install a Minister for Human Rights to restore that element of society.

This situation, however, does not detract from the commitment of the President to restoring genuine rule of law in Côte d'Ivoire as soon as possible. President Ouattara is irreversibly committed to a policy of zero tolerance for impunity. That means that all proven perpetrators of crimes or human rights violations, regardless of political affiliation or any other consideration, will be brought to justice to answer for their actions. A strong military police unit was instituted to respond to that concern, and it has helped to fast-track prosecutions of troublemakers. Two hundred and fifty members of the FRCI have been arrested and will soon be tried.

Given the state of non-rule of law that prevailed in the past, the highest priority of the Minister for Human Rights was to work to train, educate and raise consciousness on this issue in all sectors of society, beginning with the police. I will cite some examples of actions taken, with the support of UNOCI, that illustrate the will of the Government to protect human rights.

On 14 and 15 October 2011, a workshop was held to train security, military and paramilitary forces in human rights. From 1 March until July, a human rights caravan traveled to the towns of Korhogo, Man, Gagnoa and Adzope, and will reach San Pedro by the end of the month. I also note the holding of a workshop to raise consciousness in the press and media on national and international human rights mechanisms.

Transitional justice is at work. Defendants accused of various crimes during the post-electoral crisis are included in human rights training and their rights and dignity are entirely respected. Two days ago, a detained former minister with a health condition that needed attention was admitted to one of the best clinics in the country to get the treatment she required. The Minister for Human Rights visited her there and spoke with her.

It is clear that human rights can be enjoyed only within a healthy legal and judicial environment. On 19 April, a national strategy for the justice sector from 2012 to 2015 was adopted, with the support of the Government, the United Nations and other partners in legal and judicial matters. That plan represents significant progress on judicial sector reform. UNOCI and the European Union have worked in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and other stakeholders involved in the strategy. To implement it, the Ministry of Justice is in the process of instituting, with the support of UNOCI, an action plan that will also serve as a road map for international partners supporting justice sector reform.

To conclude, I stress the importance Côte d'Ivoire attaches to its cooperation with the United Nations. Our Prime Minister reiterated that in a letter to the Secretary-General wherein he stated Côte d'Ivoire's request for the UNOCI mandate to be renewed, including electoral support for upcoming local elections. While we understand the constraints that led the Secretary-General to propose a drawdown of the military component of UNOCI by one battalion, my delegation hopes that it will not be implemented at the time of mandate renewal, given the security situation and the need to avoid creating security gaps. Based on that same concern, my delegation believes that the francophone contingents of UNOCI should be bolstered so as to better fulfil the communication goals of the United Nations and UNOCI, in the interests of reconciliation and country-wide political dialogue.

These are the elements of the report that I wanted to bring to the Council's attention in the context of its forthcoming deliberations on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.